

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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April 5, 2005

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STATEMENT BY REPRESENTATIVE EDWARD J. MARKEY (D-MA) ON THE CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY APRIL 5, 2005

Today we are at a critical junction in the fight to reduce nuclear nonproliferation. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the core document holding the world together in solidarity against the spread of nuclear weapons, bombs, and bomb-making materials, is up for review in New York City in May. The 189 signatories of this critical treaty will take stock of the five years that have passed since the last Review Conference, and they have much to consider. In that brief time, we have seen new countries move closer to possessing nuclear weapons, not further away.

In 2002 international inspectors were asked to leave North Korea, and in 2003 North Korea withdrew from the NPT. Just this year North Korea announced to the world that it has nuclear weapons. In Iran, the Tehran government continues to assert its right to pursue nuclear technology. Iran has stated on many occasions that it fully intends to continue enrichment processes, and negotiations with France, Great Britain, and Germany have thus far not resulted in a full cessation of Iran's nuclear weapons-related enrichment activities. In addition to these potential challenges to the nuclear nonproliferation regime, we also must confront in the post-9/11 world the prospect that terrorist groups might acquire the materials and technologies needed to fabricate a nuclear explosive. We know Al-Qaeda has tried to obtain nuclear materials in the past, and we can expect them to continue such attempts in the future. That is why it is so important for the world to act swiftly to secure the nuclear materials in Russia and the former Soviet republics.

The nuclear proliferation threats we face today are very real and must be dealt with head on.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty has been weakened by the acts of North Korea and Iran. Some would say the treaty has been rendered irrelevant by the actions of these countries. However, we have seen in the case of Iraq that if given the power, the International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors can effectively monitor nuclear activities. It is true that the NPT needs to be made stronger. The Seventh NPT Review Conference that will be taking place in May can and must become a mechanism through which the world comes together to strengthen the NPT's restrictions on acquiring nuclear explosives and the materials needed to produce them. Taking advantage of the Review Conference to advance an affirmative nonproliferation agenda will require active involvement and leadership from the United States.

The resolution that Representative Spratt and I are introducing today is aimed at encouraging the U.S. to play an active and affirmative role in making the upcoming NPT Review Conference a success. The resolution would:

- Reaffirm the U.S. Congress' commitment to the NPT.

- Urge the immediate diplomatic and collective economic leverage to halt Iran's uranium enrichment processes and to dismantle North Korea's weapons program.
- Urge the establishment of controls on critical technologies related to nuclear weapons.
- Urge increased authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency to carry out more aggressive inspections and monitoring.
- Urge the application of penalties for withdrawing from the NPT.
- Urge the acceleration of dismantlement-obligations under the NPT.
- Urge the strengthening and expansion of the Proliferation Security Initiative.

I look forward to working with Mr. Spratt, with other interested Members of the House and Senate, and with the Arms Control Association and the Carnegie Endowment and other representatives from the arms control community on this resolution, and to building a positive nonproliferation agenda that will advance America's vital interest in preventing the world's most dangerous weapons from ending up in the hands of the world's most dangerous or unstable regimes.

For more on Rep. Markey's work to address nuclear proliferation: <http://www.house.gov/markey/>

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